




MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: February 8, 2008

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item IX: Consideration of resolution authorizing entering into long term agreements, requiring no expenditures or commitment of land rights or resources from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority except staff time, with individuals, companies, and public and private utility companies to reduce net operational expenses, including utility bills, and to reduce the agency's net carbon footprint and increase energy efficiency.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing entering into long term agreements, requiring no expenditures or commitment of land rights or resources from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority except staff time, with individuals, companies, and public and private utility companies to reduce net operational expenses, including utility bills, and to reduce the agency's net carbon footprint and increase energy efficiency.

Background: The MRCA's broad jurisdiction, numerous land holdings, and many contacts positions the agency to become involved in unique projects. The agency has expertise and a strong reputation to offer partners. Staff has recently become aware of potential opportunities to work with utilities on wind generation power projects.

These opportunities open doors to reduce operational expenses via reduced utility bills. To the extent that the agency is instrumental in the production of wind generated power, its net carbon footprint and energy efficiency are reduced.

The potential may exist for the MRCA to partner with windmills and/or companies in contracts with utilities. In unique cases, utilities are open to entering into contracts with external entities to expand their green energy product capacity.

An individual has specifically petitioned the MRCA to partner on such projects with utilities. Such projects could involve the MRCA's properties, and they also could not be related to any MRCA properties. As a first step, staff is requesting authorization to enter into agreements and contacts that are not related to any MRCA properties or resources.

The authorization requested in this action also prohibits paying any related capital investment, fees, or greater than nominal expenses. In short, these potential ventures offer no possible financial downside to the MRCA.

In contrast, the potential ventures could substantially reduce the MRCA's net payment of utility bills and operational expenses. Any wind energy production related to an MRCA contract also represents the agency's incremental net reduction of its carbon footprint.

These savings could be increased by future ventures that involve the placement of environmentally friendly and visually insignificant wind generation equipment on MRCA properties. That step is more complex contractually and environmentally and thus requires substantially more study.

Staff seeks the proposed no risk, limited authorization to take advantage of timely opportunities. There are no guarantees, however nothing ventured nothing gained. In this case, all that is being ventured is nominal staff time from the Natural Resources and Planning and Legal divisions.

A key to the proposed ventures is that our potential partner is the driving force. In short, staff does not have the time or funding, or complete expertise, to purchase such ventures on its own. Given that the only proposed cost is limited staff time, that could result in major reduction in the agency's next operational expenses and increased energy efficiency using wind generated power, it should be incumbent on the MRCA to a move in the proposed direction.